

CSBG Newsletter



A Community Services Block Grant Program News Forum

Greetings! Hope everyone is well and staying hydrated. Tennessee had some scorching days, but fall is just around the corner! Our team had the pleasure to slow down a bit this past month while enjoying some scheduled conversations and learning more about the great work your agencies are doing in communities across the state. Although our pace changed, steady work continues with the State Annual Report, new conversations, and upcoming CSBG Community Action Plan Application Review. It is our hope that with these longer, sunny days that agency staff have been able to slow down as well and take some much-needed moments of rest and reflection. You deserve it! We appreciate you!

Newsletter Changes

Our quarterly newsletter is evolving to include video portions that will highlight agency work. Agencies will be invited to share information for some special editions throughout the year. You all are so fantastic, creative, and special that we want to share your information in as many ways as possible!

Warmest Regards,

Your CSBG Team

Content in This Newsletter | July 2024

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Agency Wins

Innovative programs, services, achievements, community awards, and accomplishments from agencies across the state

Supporting Success for Students and Parents!

Although school is out, Knoxville-Knox County CAC's East Neighborhood Center continues to help students achieve success. Started in 2009, the organization's tutoring program helped students in grades K-8 to become successful in both school and life by serving the whole family.

The tutoring environment is designed to be a relaxing place for students to feel safe, learn, improve literacy and math skills while receiving wholistic supports that promote development. Sessions are led by certified teachers with experience empowering students who are progressing more slowly than their peers. These specialized instructors bring energy and positivity to the classroom.

During the 2023-2024 school year, 22 students received tutoring in reading, math, science, and social studies and reported positive academic outcomes. Of these elementary and middle school students, 17 improved one letter grade in one or more key subjects. Two students improved their grades in all subjects and three students maintained "A" and "B" grade evaluations while other students reported just a few "C" grades!

A major success factor for the Tutoring Program is emphasis on building relationships and providing support to both children and their parents. Beyond learning, tutoring sessions include meals for both student and parents, periodic gift cards for transportation and grocery needs, whole-family events, and individualized summer enrichment opportunities. The program also partners with AmeriCorps and its members who mentor and provide specialized coaching skills in writing and science. This family investment allows for growth in students' academic, social, and other life skills. Connecting families to other CAC programs and community resources and inviting families to contact tutoring staff at any time with questions about school, behavioral issues, or other family needs builds trust between program staff, students, and families and helps the program to produce consistent results year after year.

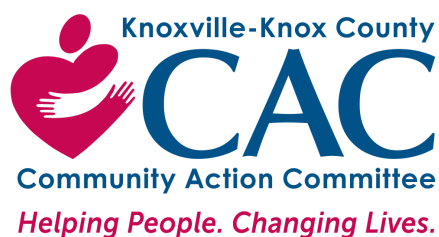
Questions about the tutoring program or how its tactics might be a good fit for your organization and clients?

Contact:

Mr. Albert Nelson at the East Neighborhood Center

Albert.Nelson@KnoxCAC.org

865-546-5125



Tutoring Program participant Madison Hicks



Tutoring Program participant Isaiah Denning



Tutoring Program participant Zamira Hicks

Submit Your Agency's Win

The "Agency Wins" column spotlights innovative programs, services, achievements, community awards, and accomplishments from agencies across the state. If there's an activity or agency accomplishment you're proud of, we want to hear from you. Your story can inspire others.

[Submit Your Agency Win](#)

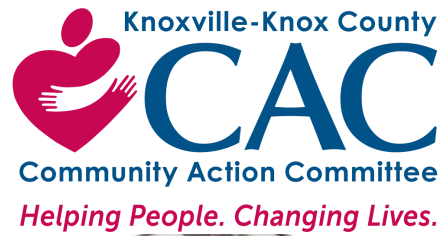
The Best Play Book

Effective program practices that help Tennesseans move forward.

Ironing Out the Obstacles: A Workforce Development Program

Success Story

Helping Tennesseans move forward often requires addressing multiple barriers and linking community members to the right resources to achieve progress. When Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) Workforce Development staff met Dustin Bunch in late December 2023, he was starting a 12-year probationary period. Prior to serving three years for a drug conviction, Mr. Bunch was a successful ironworker who loved his work and traveled for job assignments. He recalls returning from an out-of-town jobsite to discover his home sold and his bank accounts emptied. With nowhere to live, no money or worldly possessions, he became consumed with anger, depressed and began selling drugs. His activities led to a three-year incarceration. Once released, Mr. Bunch started rebuilding through a residential recovery program and life at a Knoxville transitional living facility. It was at this point he was introduced to CAC's Workforce Development program.



Dustin Bunch, Workforce Development Program participant

Mr. Bunch's CAC Employment Specialist helped him create a resume, leverage job search techniques, and encouraged him to return to ironwork, a field that he knew and loved. Within three weeks, Mr. Bunch received an employment opportunity as a Mechanical Maintenance Fabricator at a local business, but as a recently released former inmate, he had limited resources needed to achieve employment success. A referral from his Employment Specialist made it possible for Mr. Bunch to receive a bicycle from another community organization. CAC Workforce Development purchased steel-toed boots and connected him to other community resources related to employment success. Today, Mr. Bunch continues to excel at work and lives with family and has custody of his son. As he moves forward living in recovery, he remains thankful for the CAC's Workforce Development program and its assistance on his path forward. Mr. Bunch embodies the finest type of agency success story and a shining example of how engaged community action can help people to help themselves and change their lives for the better.

Over the last five years, Knoxville-Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) Workforce Development program reinvented itself to better meet the needs of clients like Mr. Bunch "where they are." The program established strong partnerships with the local county jail system and several transitional housing providers. Today, the program combines free, court-approved Anger-Management, Domestic Violence, Parenting, and Fatherhood classes with work tools and clothing support for many of its clients. Staff regularly conduct job skills, resume building, employment search and interview workshops sessions and host job fairs. Recognizing the importance of transportation and

business partnerships, the Workforce Development program also collaborates with CAC's Transit department and local businesses to connect participants to employers.

Questions about the Workforce Development program or how its features could help the Tennesseans you serve?

Contact:

Ray Abbas, Workforce Development Senior Manager

865-546-3500

Tell Us Your Best Plays!

Best Plays are demonstrate the best practices for service delivery/administration or programing. If there is advice you'd like to share with others to help serve communities in our state, please share!

Share a Best Play

Agency Highlight

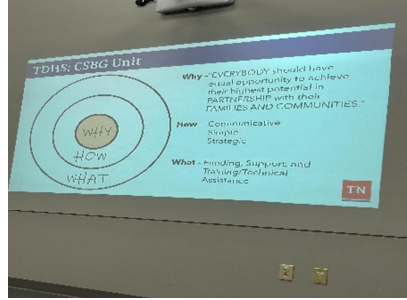
Getting Back to the Roots with Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency



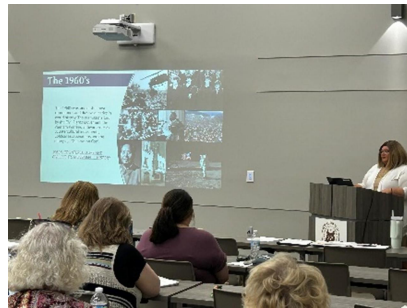
Upper Cumberland Human Resource Agency's leadership, frontline staff, and the TDHS CSBG team spent the day together for training and discussion recently. After collaborative discussion, the focus of training became "Getting Back to The Roots." The morning session included a review of the history of Community Action, HRAs, Mission, Vision, the Why of Our Work, and CSBG Eligible Entity alignment with state and federal partners. The afternoon session consisted of a brainstorming discussion about strategic planning for the future, capacity, community needs, and partnerships. It was a great day of learning, activity, and making connections.



UCHRA and TDHS staff group photo



Slides from TDHS CSBG



Presentation from CSBG Team

Happenings in Tennessee

Tennessee Launches Summer EBT Program to Nutrition Assistance Program for Children

Earlier this season, Tennessee launched the [Summer Electronic Benefits Transfer \(Summer EBT\)](#) program, a federally funded food assistance program administered at the state level. In Tennessee, the Department of Human Services (TDHS) utilizes records from the state’s Department of Education (DOE) to provide nutrition benefits to eligible school age children during summer months when school meals are not available. Like the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), benefits are distributed through EBT cards that can be used to purchase groceries. Eligible families receive \$40 per eligible child, per month, in a one-time payment of \$120. Most eligible students were automatically enrolled in the program, however students can also apply based on eligibility criteria.

Summer EBT Eligibility

Tennessee children may qualify for Summer EBT through:





SUMMER EBT SUN BUCKS



- **Participation in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Families First (TANF), or TennCare (Medicaid):** School age children (age 6-17)* who participated in SNAP, Families First (TANF), or TennCare during the 2023/24 academic year are automatically eligible for Summer EBT. These families do not need to apply for Summer EBT.
- **2023/24 National School Lunch Program Eligibility:** Children who applied and were approved to receive free or reduced-price meals at a National School Lunch Program (NSLP) participating school during the 2023/24 academic year are automatically eligible for Summer EBT regardless of age. These families do not need to apply to receive Summer EBT.
- **Summer EBT Application:** Families of children who receive SNAP, Families First, and/or TennCare but are outside of Tennessee's compulsory school age, and families of children who didn't participate in SNAP, Families First, TennCare, or NSLP** for the 2023/24 school year can apply to receive Summer EBT. These children must attend a NSLP-participating school to be eligible for Summer EBT, and benefit approval will be based on [income guidelines](#).

*Note: *Tennessee's compulsory school age is 6-17. Children outside of Tennessee's compulsory school age cannot be automatically approved for Summer EBT through SNAP, Families First, or TennCare participation and must file a Summer EBT application. **Students who attended Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) schools and receive free breakfast/free lunch without filing a NSLP application cannot be automatically approved for Summer EBT. These families must file a Summer EBT application and meet income guidelines.*

This year's Summer EBT benefit distributions began in June. Parents can log in to the Summer EBT Parent Portal at <https://onedhs.tn.gov/parent> to view their child's Summer EBT benefits, link their child(ren), verify or change address, and sign up to receive text message notifications.

If a parent or guardian has questions that are not answered through the [Summer EBT website](#) or [Summer EBT Parent Portal](#), they may call One DHS Customer Service at 833-772-TDHS (8347) for assistance. Parents who believe their children qualified for Summer EBT, but did not receive benefits can submit an appeal on the Parent Portal starting August 15, 2024.

Summer EBT Toolkit for Community Partners

To make it easy for community organizations to share information about Summer EBT, TDHS created a toolkit that includes a flyer, graphics and ready to use communications content. [Click Here to view](#). An [introduction video](#) can be

TDHS Encourages Tennesseans to Recognize and Report the Signs of Elder Abuse



Suspect Abuse?

Call APS Hotline 1-888-277-8366 or Report Online
<https://reportadultabuse.dhs.tn.gov/>



On June 15, 2024, the Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) [Adult Protective Services team](#) observed World Elder Abuse Awareness Day (WEAAD) and continues to encourage Tennesseans to recognize and report signs of elder abuse. The International Network for the Prevention of Elder Abuse and the World Health Organization established WEAAD in 2006 to increase community awareness of this growing problem.

Elder abuse can take various forms, including physical, emotional, sexual, and financial abuse, as well as neglect and abandonment. The signs of elder abuse may not always be evident, making it imperative for friends, family members, caregivers, and community members to stay informed and recognize the warning signs. Some common indicators of elder abuse include unexplained injuries, sudden changes in behavior or mood, withdrawal from usual activities, unexplained financial transactions, and poor personal hygiene.

The APS team at TDHS investigates reports of abuse and each of us can take an active role in preventing and reporting suspected abuse. We encourage you and your teams to share information on reducing elder abuse in Tennessee and make a report when you see the signs of abuse.

How to Report Elder Abuse in Tennessee

Call the hotline at 1-888-277-8366 or submit a report online at <https://reportadultabuse.dhs.tn.gov/>.

Events from TDHS

Tennessee Department of Human Services has events and happenings to serve Tennesseans across the state. [Click Here to learn about upcoming events for Tennesseans and advocates.](#)

Hamilton County

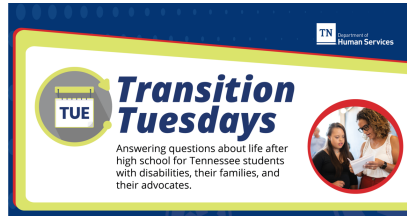
2024 Computer Literacy Workshops

A beginner-friendly learning space for Tennesseans with disabilities and community members.





A Division of Rehabilitation Services Event
[TN.Gov/HumanServices/Disability-Services.html](https://tn.gov/human-services/disability-services.html)

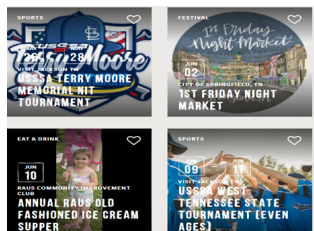


Tennessee Emergency Management Trainings

[Click Here to view upcoming trainings.](#)

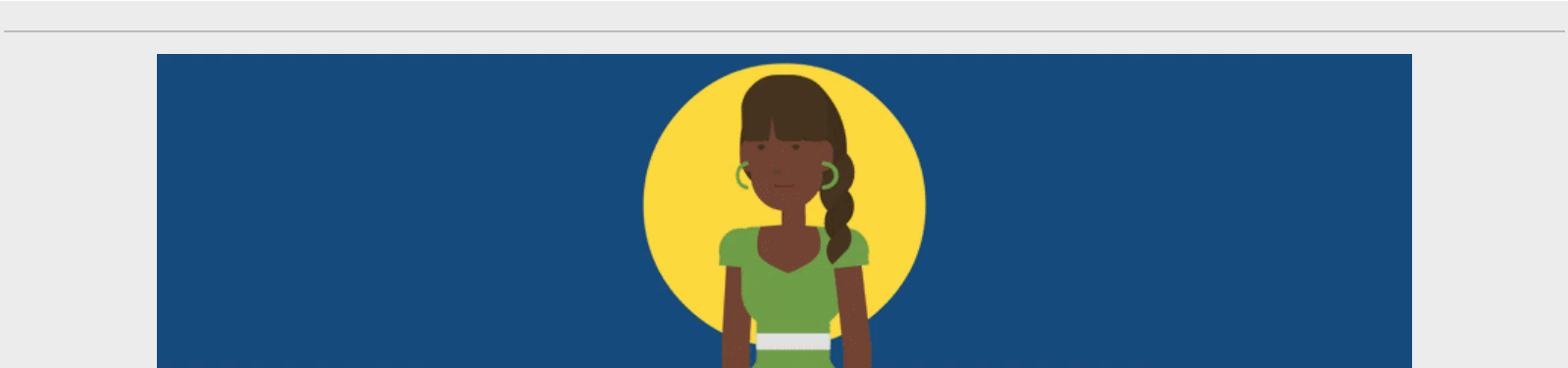


Events from Tennessee State Parks and Department of Tourist Development



Have an upcoming happening? Please share!

Share an UpcomingHappening



Ask the Community

Community Impact in Action is meant to not only provide answers from the TDHS CSBG Office but also act as a “crowd-sourcing” forum. This column is an opportunity for agencies to pose questions to both the CSBG team and other agencies. Agency staff members are encouraged to both ask questions and respond directly to questions from other agencies in the “Ask the Community” column.

Have a Questions for the Community?

Have a question for the TDHS CSBG team, want to know how other CSBG members are handling a problem, or are curious about a particular topic?

[Submit a Question to the CSBG Network](#)

About Community Impact in Action

Community Impact in Action is a quarterly e-newsletter that connects the Community Service Block Grant (CSBG) network in Tennessee. The newsletter is designed to amplify agency voices across the state and increase communication and peer sharing opportunities. The CSBG network can use this newsletter as a forum to share information with each other and the Tennessee Department of Human Services CSBG team.

Who can make a submission to Community Impact in Action?

Any agency representative can create and submit content for “Agency Wins, The Best Play Book, Ask the Community or Community Events” articles and we look forward to reading and sharing your submissions. However, we strongly recommend that agencies establish an internal approval process for submitting content to Community Impact in Action. TDHS reserves the right to edit content and a representative may contact content contributors for additional information.

When to Make Submissions

Community Impact in Action is published on a quarterly basis (January, April, July, October) and submissions for the next newsletter should be submitted no later than the 15th day of the last month in the quarter. This is especially true for upcoming event submissions. For example, an event scheduled to take place in April, May or June should be submitted no later than March 15th. However, in some cases, events may be shared on the TDHS online event calendar or social media calendar without being shared in the newsletter. These events should be submitted no later than four weeks prior to the event.

Have questions about *Community Impact in Action* or related topics? Email the Tennessee Department of Human Services CSBG Office at CSBG.DHS@tn.gov with the subject line "**Community Impact in Action Newsletter**".

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